

erry Martinez
Governor



Pueblo de San Ildefonso
Office of the Governor

September 15, 2010

Via Facsimile (505) 828-9475 and 1st Class Mail

Honorable Senator Tim Eichenberg, Chair
GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING TASK FORCE
7800 Charger Trail NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Re: Taskforce Proposal to Eliminate New Mexico Indian Affairs
Department

Dear Senator Eichenberg:

As Governor of the Pueblo de San Ildefonso, I write this letter in strong support of maintaining the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) as a cabinet-level department within the New Mexico State Government structure and urge the Government Restructuring Task Force to reconsider any proposal to eliminate or downgrade the IAD to a division or a bureau within the administration.

I understand the serious financial issues that a government, whether it is the state, county, city or tribe, currently faces in these tough economic times. I also understand the need to look at streamlining government and services. However, it is a serious mistake to consider the elimination or downgrading of the IAD.


The 22 Pueblos, Tribes and Nations in New Mexico are not community organizations or special interest groups but are distinct sovereign governments and the IAD should not be considered as simply a community service division. The New Mexico IAD is the only cabinet-level state Indian affairs agency in the United States and serves as a proud example of how the State of New Mexico and the Tribes work together on a government-to-government basis to address important issues that affect the Indian Pueblos, Tribes and Nations.

Elevating the IAD to a cabinet-level department in 2003 was a positive and progressive commitment to give the State's Native American citizens a voice and presence in the Governor's Cabinet and among other State agencies and departments. Since that time, the work of the IAD continues to strengthen and

Bryan P. Montoya
1st Lieutenant Governor

Dale Martinez
2nd Lieutenant Governor

Myron J. Gonzales
Head Sheriff

mond J. Martinez
Assistant Sheriff


Laurence Peña
Head Fiscale

Kenneth Weahkee
Assistant Fiscale

Donald J. Gonzales
Assistant Fiscale

Nathan Sanchez
Head War Captain

Christopher A. Moquino
2nd Asst. War Captain

 Timothy A. Martinez
Assistant War Captain

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improve state-tribal relations as the lead coordinating agency in the State Government on Native American concerns and needs. Eliminating or downgrading the IAD would clearly be a step in the wrong direction.

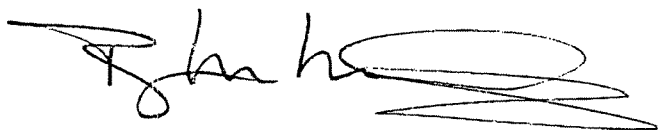
IAD plays a critical role in communication and collaboration between the State of New Mexico and the 22 sovereign tribal governments on matters and initiatives that are important to the Tribes, the State and their shared constituents: health, education, economic development, public safety, infrastructure needs, environment and natural resources. These are matters that have received high-level consistent attention because of the efforts of the IAD as a cabinet-level department. IAD has worked closely with Tribes through its administration and management of the Tribal Infrastructure Fund and has provided important assistance with capital outlay funds to ensure that viable and important tribal projects were not impacted during the recent deauthorization of funding. The support of IAD has helped Tribes work towards improving inadequate and antiquated infrastructure systems on tribal lands.

IAD efforts have also resulted in passage of legislation that will benefit tribes and the Indian citizens of the State – the State-Tribal Collaboration Act, Severance Bonds for Tribal Infrastructure and Amendments to the New Mexico Subdivision Act. IAD provides important input to the State's Legislature on Indian-related bills and issues through testimony before legislative committees and completion of Fiscal Impact Report requests from the Legislative Finance Committee. These are a few examples of the broad range of activities and solutions that have resulted from having a cabinet-level department that is devoted to Native American needs and concerns.

It is unlikely that the IAD would be as effective as a bureau or division within a newly created Community Services Department that combines services for several other constituent groups or organizations – none of which are sovereign governments. Downgrading this important Department would undo much of the hard work and commitment to developing and maintaining strong and lasting government-to-government relationships between the State and the 22 Pueblos, Tribes and Nations that serves as a model for open communication, collaboration and partnerships among governments.

The IAD is key to the continued strength and stability of the state-tribal relationship that is unique to New Mexico. I respectfully request that the Task Force maintain and support the New Mexico IAD as a cabinet-level department.

Sincerely,



Perry M. Martinez, Governor

cc: Honorable Senator John Pinto, Co-Chair, Interim Indian Affairs Committee
Honorable Representative James Roger Madalena, Co-Chair, Interim Indian Affairs Committee
IAD Secretary Alvin Warren